

Assembly of First Nations

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
September 3-4-5, 2025, Winnipeg, MB

Resolution no. 26/2025

TITLE: Support for the Renewal and Expansion of First Nations Adult Education Funding

SUBJECT: Education

MOVED BY: Chief Leroy Denny, Eskasoni First Nation, NS

SECONDED BY: Tyrone McNeil, Proxy, Sq'ewlets (Scowlitz) First Nation, BC

DECISION Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:

- i. Article 14(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
- ii. Article 14(2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
- iii. Article 14(3): States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.
- iv. Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

B. First Nations have the Inherent and Treaty right to receive education that is in accordance with their culture, values, traditions, and languages and that is free of prejudice and discrimination.

C. First Nations have advocated for federal support of adult education rooted in a vision of lifelong learning, including learning opportunities at every stage of life that contributes to individual and community health and well-being.

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- D. In 2018, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), National Indian Education Council (NIEC), Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) co-developed the *2018 Policy Proposal on First Nations Post-Secondary Education* (2018 PSE Policy Proposal), later amended into a Memorandum to Cabinet. The 2018 PSE Policy Proposal referenced the outstanding need for adult education and called for \$124.5 million annually in transitional funding for secondary upgrading and/or completion to assist First Nations students to be prepared for post-secondary education.
- E. In 2021, the Government of Canada announced an adult education investment of \$350 million over a five-year period through the First Nations Post-Secondary Education Strategy, expiring in March 2027.
- F. In 2021, the AFN, NIEC, CCOE and ISC co-developed the *2021 Post-Secondary Education Policy Proposal on First Nations-led Local, Regional and Treaty-based Models* (2021 PSE Policy Proposal). The 2021 PSE Policy Proposal proposes regional post-secondary education (PSE) models with increased funding, resources, and support for First Nations post-secondary education. Furthermore, it calls to unlock the \$350 million investment announced in Budget 2021 for adult education, with regional allocations determined by First Nations to meet the unique needs of adult learners in each region.
- G. In 2021, ISC unilaterally created the First Nations Adult Secondary Education Program and the First Nations Adult Education in Yukon and Northwest Territories Program. These programs are the mechanism by which Canada flows funding and were developed without First Nations input. As a result, the programs fail to meet the needs of First Nations as identified in the 2021 PSE Policy Proposal.
- H. The ISC-created programs are time-limited, do not offer flexible expenditures and do not allow First Nations to expand adult education programming for all their members.
- I. First Nations have created over 104 new adult education programs across the country and have 108 new schools admitting adults since the investment in 2021.
- J. Time-limited adult education funding for First Nations is inequitable and must be replaced with the same ongoing funding that is provided to non-Indigenous learners.
- K. Increased levels of education in adults positively correlate with stronger social, health, and economic outcomes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nations-in-Assembly:

- 1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations, Chiefs Committee on Education, and National Indian Education Council to continue to advocate for sustainable, core funding for adult education programming that is comparable to funding for school-aged and infrastructure.
- 2. Call on Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to renew and expand funding for First Nations adult education by:
 - a. Ensuring adult education funding is no longer time-limited and is established as a core allocation;
 - b. Allocating \$198.9 million annually to ensure long-term, sustainable support for First Nations adult education programs; and
 - c. Enabling flexible program expenditures and eligibility as determined by First Nations.

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3. Call on ISC to ensure that funding is delivered before the expiration of Budget 2021 allocations, so that the hundreds of First Nations students, programs, and schools relying on this support are not interrupted or forced to scale back.
4. Affirm that nothing in this resolution is meant or shall be interpreted to diminish, limit, impact or supersede the ability of a First Nation to exercise their inherent jurisdictions, to exercise and fulfill their rights and authorities under Treaties, regional models, or to engage in their unique relationship with Canada.

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